

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GH OVIP (DAVIS, NATHANIEL)

SUBJECT: DAVIS VISIT - "ATMOSPHERICS"

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS FROM AMBASSADOR BLACK

1. APART FROM THE SERIES OF REPORTING TELEGRAMS ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS' VISIT TO GHANA, I WISH TO NOTE THE DEPARTMENT CERTAIN ASPECTS WHICH I BELIEVE TO BE IMPORTANT AND FOR WHICH, TO SOME EXTENT, THERE MAY BE POSSIBLE CORRECTIVES AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT. I WANT TO CENTER PRIMARILY ON THE OFF-AGAIN/ON-AGAIN CALL ON CHAIRMAN ACHEAMPONG AND, SECONDARILY, ON MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE VISIT.

2. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S VISIT WAS CLEARED APRIL 15 WITH NRC SECRETARY DEBRAH, WHO SIMULTANEOUSLY OFFERED TO SCHEDULE A COURTESY CALL ON THE CHAIRMAN ON EITHER MAY 15 OR 19. ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, HE MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EMBASSY'S REPRESENTATIVE TO CLEAR THE VISIT WITH MFA, EXPLAINING: "OF COURSE WE CAN OVERRIDE THEM, BUT WE SHOULD CLEAR THE VISIT AS A MATTER OF FORM." WHEN THE A/SEC'S TRIP WAS MOVED FORWARD ONE WEEK, THE COURTESY CALL WAS IMMEDIATELY RESCHEDULED FOR MAY 12.

3) AT THE MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON MAY 9, ACTING COMMISSIONER KOTEI CONCLUDED THE SESSION BY INFORMING DAVIS AND ME THAT HE REGRETTED THAT THE CALL ON THE CHAIRMAN HAD HAD TO BE CANCELED, OWING TO ACHEAMPONG'S TIGHT SCHEDULE IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT KOUTCHE OF NIGER. WHEN WE PRESSED

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FIRMLY BUT DIPLOMATICALLY, KOTEI SAID HE WOULD TRY TO GET THE

DECISION REVERSED. WE ALSO ENLISTED THE ASSISTANCE OF MFA PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OTOO AND CHIEF OF PROTOCOL WASSIAMAL. (DEBRAH, LIKE COMMISSIONER BAAH, WAS STILL AWAY, ATTENDING THE COMMONWEALTH MEETING IN KINGSTON.) THAT AFTERNOON, KOTEI INFORMED US THAT THE CALL HAD BEEN RESCHEDULED FOR 1830 HOURS THAT EVENING, MAY 9. HOWEVER, A FEW MINUTES BEFORE SIX THAT EVENING, KOTEI PHONED ME TO SAY THAT ACHEAMPONG HAD LEFT HIS RESIDENCE AND THAT HIS DESTINATION AND TIME OF RETURN WERE UNKNOWN.

4. ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY (MAY 10 AND 11) VERY STRONG REPRESENTATIONS WERE MADE TO SENIOR GOG OFFICIALS, WHICH EVENTUALLY WERE SUCCESSFUL. THE APPOINTMENT WAS RESCHEDULED FOR MAY 12 AND DID, IN FACT, TAKE PLACE. (CHAIRMAN ACHEAMPONG'S ATTEMPT TO BACK OUT OF A FIRM COMMITMENT VOLUNTEERED ON HIS BEHALF WAS TOTALLY UNEXPECTED BY THE EMBASSY AND APPARENTLY BY ALL GOG OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE DISCUSSED THE MATTER. HOWEVER, WE HAVE AT LEAST ONE REPORT FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE THAT THE CHAIRMAN "EXPLAINED" HIS ACTION TO A NUMBER OF COMMISSIONERS ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE HIM TO REVERSE IT AS HAVING BEEN TAKEN ON THE BASIS OF "SOLIDARITY WITH OUR OAU BROTHERS." WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WHO MAY HAVE SUGGESTED THE SOLIDARITY RATIONALE TO THE CHAIRMAN.)

5. MEANWHILE, THE MAY 10 ISSUE OF THE DAILY TRAPHIC HEADLINED THE STORY ON DAVIS WITH: "KUTU KACHEAMPONG(NICKNAME) CAN'T SEE DAVIS," CITING "CROWDED SCHEDULE." FOLLOWING THE LEAD PARAGRAPHS ON THIS TOPIC, THE REMAINDER OF THE STORY WAS QUITE ACCURATE (ALBEIT SELECTIVE) IN ITS ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING AT THE MFA, WHICH WAS ATTENDED ALSO BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS. IN A SEPARATE CABLE WE HAVE REPORTED SEVERAL PRESS ITEMS AND EDITORIALS WHICH DEVOTED SPACE TO EXPOSITION OF DAVIS' ALLEGED ROLE IN CHILE. AS NOTED IN THAT CABLE, IT APPEARS TO US THAT DETAILS ON CHILEAN EVENTS MUST HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED BY OUTSIDE SOURCES, AS THE TYPE OF INFORMATION CONVEYED (WHETHER OR NOT CORRECT) IS SIMPLY BEYOND THE KEN OF ANY GHANAIAAN TIMES STAFF WE HAVE MET.

6. APPARENTLY A PRESS BLACKOUT ON THE MEETING WITH ACHEAMPONG WAS LATER INVOKED. AT HIS AIRPORT DEPARTURE, DAVIS WAS INTERVIEWED
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BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT-RUN GHANA NEWS AGENCY,WHO WAS TOLD (TWICE) THAT DAVIS AND I HAD JUST COME FROM MEETING WITH THE CHAIRMAN. NONETHELESS, GNA'S OUTPUT FOR MAY 12 AND 13 DID NOT CARRY THE ITEM, BUT SIMPLY NOTED THAT DAVIS HAD LEFT AND HAD HAD USEFUL TALKS WITH KOTEI AND HIS STAFF. NEITHER OF THE TWO DAILIES HAVE SINCE REPORTED THE CALL ON ACHEAMPONG, AND AS LATE AS MAY 20 TIMES FEATURE ARTICLE LEADS WITH STATEMENT THAT DAVIS DID NOT MEET ACHEAMPONG. SITUATION THUS HAS MOVED FROM

NON-REPORTING TO DENIAL OF FACT.

7.TWO POINTS SEEM TO PRESENT THEMSELVES. THE FIRST PERTAINS TO THE CALL ON ACHEAMPONG AND THE SECOND ON PRESS MANIPULATION. TO LOOK AT THE SECOND,THE VISIT COINCIDED WITH THE CELEBRATING OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "VICTORY OVER HITLERITE FASCISM." THE SOVIETS AND THEIR COLLEAGUES PLACED PAGES OF PAID MATERIAL IN THE PRESS. WE ASSUME THEY ALSO STIMULATED THE PLACEMENT OF NEWS ITEMS AND EDITORIAL MATERIAL WITH A VIEW TO PREJUDICING THE GOG AGAINST THE DAVIS VISIT.WE HAVE NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THIS (ALTHOUGH SOME MAY TURN UP), BUT IT SEEMS TO US TO BE A MORE THAN REASONABLE ASSUMPTION. ANOTHER ITEM IS THE FACT THAT A "DEMONSTRATION" DENOUNCING THE DAVIS VISIT WAS ORGANIZED MAY 10 AT USIS BY ABOUT TEN PERSONS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST-LINKED PAN AFRICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT. ALL OF THESE FACTORS, WE CONCLUDED, LED TO THE CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE, BUILDING ON THE ORIGINAL ANTI-DAVIS OAU RESOLUTION, WHICH PERSUADED ACHEAMPONG AND SOME OF HIS ADVISORS TO ATTEMPT TO CANCEL THE COURTESY CALL.

8. IT WAS INDEED UNFORTUNATE THAT DEBRAH WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE PERIOD, AS THIS UNDOUBTEDLY PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE OPPOSING THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT TO PLAY ON THE CHAIRMAN'S CONCERNS, PERHAPS ALSO REMINDING HIM THAT BAAH WAS UNABLE TO MEET SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING THE 1973 AND 1974 UNGA SESSIONS.

9. ONE FURTHER RELATIVELY MINOR "ATMOSPHERIC" WAS THE INTENSE INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICERS IN EVERY MINUTE DETAIL OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S CALL ON THE CHAIRMAN. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ATTEMPTED TO CORNER ME ON ONE OCCASION AND POSE SUCH QUESTIONS AS "DID THE VISIT LAST LESS THAN A HALF HOUR OR MORE THAN A HALF HOUR?" WHEN I

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INDICATED THAT IT WAS MORE THAN HALF AN HOUR, HE THEN ASKED, "WAS IT 32 MINUTES OR MORE THAN 32 MINUTES?" ETC., ETC. OTHER FRENCH EMBOFFS ASKED THE A/SEC'S EXACT ETD, LEADING US TO BELIEVE FRENCH OFFICIALS PLANNED TO MONITOR HIS IVORY COAST VISIT CLOSELY. OTHER EMBASSIES ALSO EVIDENCED INTEREST, THOUGH NOT TO THE EXTENT OF THE FRENCH.
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